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STALINISM AND THE WORLD CONFLICT

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The observer of international affairs who traces the course of the great East-West conflict which emerged in the aftermath of the second World War sooner or later finds himself face to face with the problem of its underlying causes. This is a problem of much greater difficulty and complexity than that which arises in explaining the majority of international conflicts. The existence of a multitude of sovereign states each pursuing its own national self-interest in a highly inter-dependent world inescapably gives rise to friction and conflicts between states of varying degrees of seriousness. However, the sources of these conflicts usually lie close to the surface of events and are not hard to discern. They are generated by objective collisions of national interests and tend to subside when and if the particular situations which cause them are satisfactorily resolved. The postwar conflict between Russia and the Western democracies has been a conflict of a different order. Another way of putting this would be to say that while most international conflicts arise out of local issues, the issue here is not one that can be localized. Like external symptoms of an organic disease, the many different conflicts which have broken out on the surface of East-west relations since the end of the war, ranging from the deadlocks in negotiation and the cleavages in the United Nations to the grim trials of strength in places like Berlin and Korea, have been phenomena of a secondary character stemming from and reflecting a basic conflict down deep in the sources of events. This underlying basic conflict and its causes will form the theme of the pages that follow.

There is a general observation which must first be made in order to place the problem in its proper perspective. The basic conflict has been essentially one-sided both in its origin and in its driving force. Surveying the sequence of events beginning in 1944 and 1945, we see the Soviet government acting from the outset as though there were an East-West conflict in prospect or in progress, while Western diplomacy kept operating for some time on the premise that this was not, or at any rate need not be, the case. The attempts of the Western powers to restore independence to liberated states and enlist Soviet cooperation in administering occupied territories ran up against growing difficulties. At every key point of East-West contact--in the negotiations between heads of state and foreign ministers, in the relations between Soviet and Western representatives in the capitals of Eastern European countries, in the dealings between the occupation authorities in Germany, Austria and Korea--Western representatives encountered multiplying signs of Soviet aggressiveness and intransigence. Only gradually and reluctantly did the leaders of Western policy come to the conclusion that the Kremlin's policies were forcing upon the democracies a new struggle of deadly earnestness and consequence. Defensive counter-moves ~~were~~ were called for and these appeared in various forms, such as the program of aid for Greece and Turkey and, at a later date, rearmament and the Atlantic pact. In Moscow these counter-moves were presented to the Russian public as evidence of the West's aggressive intentions toward a peaceful U.S.S.R. and as justification for the sacrifices which were demanded of the Russian people in order to

build up the Soviet war machine. However, the fact remains that all through the period of conflict the Soviet posture has been offensive and the Western posture defensive. The source of the basic conflict lay in the East and the conflict was joined by the Western powers because they had no alternative; it was imposed upon them. Hence we must look to Soviet policy for an explanation of the origin of the cold war.

The basic conflict grew out of the aggressive policies followed by the Soviet government after the war but it would not be entirely accurate to say that these were its root cause. To get at that we have to probe into the state of mind of the men who were responsible for the decision to follow these policies. The prime mover of the conflict is the mentality of which postwar Soviet foreign policy has been a projection. We do not know at the present time just how great the influence of Stalin's individual personality was in the shaping of postwar Soviet policies, although there is reason to believe that his was a dominant role. Let us, at any rate, designate the mentality underlying the basic conflict as "Stalinist," leaving aside the question of the extent to which it represents an individual or a collective phenomenon.

The "Stalinist mentality" is one which appears to have very strong affinities with a common variety of neurotic condition known to psychology as the "aggressive type." This condition has been analyzed in detail in the works of the late Dr. Karen Horney and at this point we shall digress briefly to describe some of its characteristics. It stems, like all neuroses, from a "basic anxiety,"

which Dr. Horney defines as a feeling of being isolated in a world conceived as potentially hostile.* The aggressive type responds in the spirit of a struggle. He seeks safety through being tough and strong and through gaining power and control over others so that they will no longer have the capacity to hurt him. This involves him, so to speak, in a private "cold war" against people around him, most of whom will not readily submit to the total domination which is the only kind of relationship with others affording him a sense of security and satisfaction. In keeping with these trends, he develops a philosophy of life which looks upon the world as the arena of a ruthless struggle of all against all. This reinforces his tendency to value strength above all else as the most important equipment for successful living. In this struggle of all against all, taking the offensive appears to him to be the best defense: "To hit back or--

preferably--to hit first appears to him (logically!) as an indispensable weapon against the crooked and hostile world around him. It is nothing but intelligent, legitimate self-interest."

The attitude of persons of this type toward other people is permeated with a fundamental animosity which runs the entire gamut from covert distrust to violent outbursts of vindictive rage. The neurotic not only harbors this permanent animosity toward others but, what is equally important, assumes that others harbor the identical feeling toward him: "He is convinced that everybody at bottom is malevolent

* Karen Horney, Neurosis and Human Growth. Norton. New York, 1950, p. 18.

** Ibid., p. 206.

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and crooked, that it is only wisdom to regard everyone with distrust

until he has been proved honest. But even such proof will readily

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make room for suspicion at the slightest provocation.* It is im-

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portant to note that all this tends to set in motion a process of impairment of the neurotic's personal relations which grows worse and worse in a vicious circle. In other words, whether or not others actually do regard him with the hostility which he imputes to them, his own hostility and the aggressive behavior springing from it will eventually tend to turn them against him in self-defense. This, however, merely reinforces him in his conviction that they were hostile toward him all along, and he responds with still greater hostility and still more aggressive behavior, which tends to arouse an even stronger reaction against him, and so on. If we transpose this process from the sphere of personal relations to the sphere of political relations, we will have a ~~fairly~~ fairly faithful representation of the inner dynamics of the postwar conflict between Russia and the West up until the time of Stalin's death.

Returning now to the "Stalinist mentality," let us observe several significant ways in which it parallels or reflects a neurotic condition of the type which we have described here in highly simplified terms. As regards the neurotic's "basic anxiety" deriving from the feeling of being isolated in a hostile world, it is not hard to see a parallel to this in the Stalinist picture of Russia as an isolated fortress of socialism besieged on all sides by an angry host of capitalist states bent on closing in upon it and destroying it at the first convenient opportunity; here we have the familiar doctrine of the "capitalist encirclement." Although on the surface this is

* Ibid., p. 199.

an ideological construction rather than a psychological attitude, the tremendous tenacity with which it has been clung to in the face of events and facts which go to invalidate it points to the need for a psychological interpretation. On the one hand, we find that the entire war-time experience of Russian alliance with two mighty "capitalist" states, the United States and Great Britain, failed to unsettle the belief in a hostile capitalist encirclement, which re-emerged in Soviet writings as soon as the war was over. On the other hand, we find this same belief being maintained years later in the face of an entirely new set of facts which clearly called for some modification of it. In August, 1951 the theoretical organ of the Soviet Communist Party, Bolshevik, reported that readers were suggesting in letters to the editor that it was no longer justified to speak of a "capitalist encirclement" in view of the fact that the U.S.S.R. was now bordered largely by countries with Communist regimes. Such a view, replied this authoritative voice of Stalinism, was entirely mistaken: "Certain comrades have erroneously construed the establishment of a people's-democratic system in a number of countries bordering on the U.S.S.R. as liquidating the capitalist encirclement. Evidently, these comrades have looked upon the capitalist encirclement as a purely geographical conception, which is, of course, entirely wrong."*

In January, 1953 this same journal, now published under a new name, made the still more striking statement that "so long as capitalism remains in the principal capitalist countries, it would be wrong to speak of the liquidation of the capitalist encirclement."** All this points to the conclusion that the concept of a

* Bolshevik, No. 16, 1951, p. 61.

** Kommunist, No. 2, 1953, p. 19.

capitalist encirclement fulfills certain powerful psychological needs rooted deep in the Stalinist mentality.

Secondly, the neurotic's conception of the world as the arena of a struggle of all against all is the foundation of Stalinism as a philosophical creed. The Stalinist mind views struggle and warfare as the most fundamental and pervasive attribute not only of human existence but of the universe itself, which it sees as operating according to the dialectical law of the "struggle of opposites." History is seen as revolving around the struggle of classes. The Soviet Union is pictured as locked in mortal combat with the forces of capitalism in consequence of its historic mission as the "first shock-brigade" in the modern-day class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. The notion of struggle as the essence of life likewise pervades the Stalinist image of the world beyond the Soviet borders as a tissue of "contradictions" pitting not only class against class and group against group in each individual country but also colonies against metropolitan countries and each metropolitan country against all others. And even inside the supposedly monolithic Soviet society, the Stalinist mind sees development as proceeding through "non-antagonistic contradictions" which nevertheless necessitate a never-ending "struggle of the new against the old." The ~~Stalinist~~ obsession with the notion of warfare and struggle is the source of Stalinism's furious rejection of every manifestation of "reformism," a philosophy which implies that improvement in human affairs can on occasion come about by peaceful means.

Thirdly, the profound hostility which permeates the neurotic's

attitude toward persons around him and especially toward actual or potential rivals in the competitive struggle has a counterpart in the underlying unfriendliness or animosity toward foreign governments which is such a familiar feature of the Stalinist mentality. This is a primary source of the deviousness and secretiveness which the Soviet government customarily displays in its dealings with foreign governments and their representatives. For reasons of policy, expressions of animosity have to be kept in check in certain areas of foreign relations, such as Soviet relations with other Communist states. However, as the experience of Tito and other foreign Communist leaders has shown, the animosity itself and the suspicion and distrust which it breeds are always lurking in the background of these relations even if no sign of it appears upon the surface. No such restraint is operative in Soviet relations with "capitalist" states except during periods of temporary alliance dictated by tactical imperatives, such as the period of the Soviet-German pact and the period of the war-time coalition with the Western democracies. In this sphere free rein can be and is given to the underlying animosity, with the result that hostility builds up to an explosive intensity against the foreign government or governments which happen at any given time to be in the forefront of opposition to Soviet policy, as the United States government has been in recent years. One important corollary of this basic animosity is the need to believe that foreign governments are actuated by an equally deep or even deeper animosity toward the Soviet Union. It is therefore an unshakable article of the Stalinist faith that the capitalist world is plotting the destruction of the Soviet system, that the motives of bourgeois governments in their dealings with Moscow are sinister and

hostile and that any friendly gestures they may make are hypocritical. This makes it ^{SEEM} imperative for the Soviet government and people never to relax their "revolutionary vigilance," which connotes an attitude of always remaining suspiciously on the lookout for machinations by potential enemies who are assumed to exist in every quarter, including the U.S.S.R. itself.

One final neurotic trait which has its counterpart in the Stalinist mentality is the worship of material strength and the profound fear of being or seeming weak in any respect (one recalls in this context the famous question attributed to Stalin: "How many divisions has the Pope?"). In internal policy this attitude manifests itself in a willingness to subordinate every other consideration, including the morale of the Soviet people, to the one overriding goal of amassing economic and military strength. The obsession with strength also shows up in the vast amount of public attention bestowed upon the Soviet armed forces, and in the glorification of the power and might of the Soviet state which became such a prominent theme of Soviet propaganda writings during the postwar years. It is interesting to observe in this connection how Soviet propaganda found itself in something of a quandary in its "peace campaign" of recent years. Although the "peace" propaganda was anything but peaceful in tone, the Soviet authorities were apparently afraid that the outside world might suspect elements of Soviet weakness behind it. It therefore became the rule for Soviet press articles about the campaign to wind up with an emphatic warning that the Soviet Union's desire for peace was not to be construed as a sign of weakness or fear of war. The anxious emphasis upon this point is a good illustration of Stalinism's need always to be and appear strong. To the Stalinist men-

tality the only formula for security is overwhelming material strength.

Certain broad lines of policy flow logically from the psychological attitudes and the image of the world discussed above. In domestic affairs an all-out effort to build up a position of impregnable economic-military strength is obviously indicated. In foreign policy the need to cope with an international environment regarded as implacably hostile dictates an aggressively competitive course of conduct calculated to weaken and divide Soviet Russia's adversaries and simultaneously to expand the orbit of Soviet power and influence whenever an opportunity to do so presents itself. The logical long-range goal of this foreign policy is world hegemony, meaning by this a global preponderance of power in terms of territory, population, resources and military potential. Nothing less than this would seem to the Stalinist mentality to provide Russia with effective insurance against potential attempts of the hostile environment to crush and destroy it. In other words, establishing predominant control over the international environment is seen as the only possible means of coming to terms with it. Three main strategies recommend themselves in this ceaseless drive to better Russia's relative position in the competitive struggle. Firstly, Russia should encourage and support pro-Soviet movements and other oppositional tendencies in foreign states and their dependencies so as to weaken these states as much as possible and keep them off balance. Secondly, it should endeavor to exploit and accentuate the discords between opponent-states so as to obstruct them from joining forces against it. And thirdly, it should seek whenever possible to incorporate neighboring countries or territories within the Soviet orbit so as to bring a greater and

greater area of the hostile international environment under control. We may call these three lines of action the strategies of harassment, division and expansion. For each of the strategies the Communist ideology provides an elaborate doctrinal rationalization. The strategy of harassment is rationalized as "support for the foreign proletariat and its class organizations in the struggle to realize their legitimate demands, and for the national-liberation struggle of the oppressed peoples in the colonial rear of imperialism." The strategy of division is rationalized in terms of "contradictions rending the camp of imperialist powers." And the strategy of expansion finds ideological justification in the proposition that the Soviet Union, as the base and homeland of a world-wide proletarian revolution, must give its support to other peoples in their "revolutionary struggle for liberation from imperialist bondage." ~~As~~ Viewed through the binoculars of Marxist-Leninist doctrine, the expanding periphery of Soviet power appears as the outward growth of the world revolution.

With reference to the strategy of expansion, the question arises as to the methods which appear to the Stalinist mentality as feasible for the purpose of extending Soviet control over neighboring countries and territories. The international environment, as we have said, is regarded as implacably hostile. However, it is also regarded as terribly powerful and dangerous. Therefore the constant quest for opportunities of Soviet expansion is combined with a certain elementary tactical caution in the Kremlin lest any reckless aggressive act on its part mobilize all the potentialities of the capitalist encirclement for destructive action and bring down catastrophic consequences upon the Soviet Union. An open act of Soviet armed aggression, regardless of how successful in attaining its immediate objec-

tive, would upset the strategy of division and bring about the always feared prospect of a showdown with a solid phalanx of capitalist powers ranged against Russia. This tends to impose a limitation upon the means which the Soviet government is willing to employ to effectuate the strategy of expansion. Stalinism's recognition of this limitation is reflected in its formula of "peaceful coexistence" of the two opposing systems. To the Stalinist mentality "peaceful coexistence" does not mean that the two worlds can live together in amity, but merely that total war should be excluded as a means of resolving the conflict between them, all lesser means being legitimate. In fact, "peaceful coexistence" is the Stalinist euphemism for the state of no-war-no-peace which the West has coined the phrase "cold war" to describe.

Although these considerations militate against a sudden "adventurist" move of a military nature which would risk all the fortunes and gains of the Soviet regime on one whirl of the wheel of chance, they do not rule out various moves of a more limited character in the pursuit of the strategy of expansion. One kind of move of this description which appeals powerfully to the Stalinist mind is the war by proxy in which the Soviet Union adopts the pose of a neutral power while Communist-led forces subservient to it battle for control of new territory. The classic example of such an operation is, of course, the war in Korea. Secondly, opportunities for Soviet expansion present themselves whenever there is any internationally acceptable excuse for the Soviet Union to move its armed forces into neighboring countries, as there was in the final phase of the defeat

of Germany in 1944. In situations of this kind the strategy of expansion dictates the use of every possible means of perpetuating Soviet control over the occupied territories, the most common means being the organization of Communist-dominated puppet regimes through which control can be exercised indirectly even if the Soviet occupation forces are eventually withdrawn. So long as Soviet policy operates within the outer limits of caution referred to above, the possibilities of expansion are broadly limited to these two types of action. There are, however, exceptional situations in which techniques of internal subversion can accomplish the purpose without an outright military occupation (Czechoslovakia) or in which native Communist movements succeed in capturing control of countries by largely independent military action (Yugoslavia and China). As the Tito affair has shown, cases of the latter type pose for the Soviet regime the new and disturbing problem of consolidating and perpetuating its control over the victorious native Communist movement. Techniques of infiltration are used to buttress the ties of ideological allegiance to the Soviet Union.

Surveying the postwar course of Soviet policy in the light of this interpretation of its moving strings, we can understand to begin with that the opportunities for expansion implicit in the Soviet occupation of Eastern and East-Central Europe were irresistibly attractive to the Stalinist mentality, especially in conjunction with the immediate postwar weakness of the regimes in Western Europe and the precipitate withdrawal of American armed might. As Stalin implied by his speech of February 9, 1946, in which he charted an internal policy of concentration on building up Russia's military-economic potential, it was understood in Kremlin circles that Soviet

expansion was incompatible with continued good relations with the Western democracies. However, the Stalinist mind could see no particular disadvantage in a break with the West because, as we have suggested, it assumed that in any event the real attitude of the Western powers toward Russia was at bottom crooked, malevolent and self-seeking. Since no amount of Soviet "good behavior" could alter this basic fact, the only logical course for the Soviet government to take was, in this view, to seize the initiative and consolidate its position in the duel for power which would ~~an~~ inexorably emerge because it was in the nature of things that it should. The developing crisis of East-West relations found fresh focal points in the countries subjected to a divided occupation (Germany, Austria and Korea). The Stalinist power reflex operated here as in countries wholly occupied by Soviet forces, with the result that temporary boundaries of military occupation zones hardened into quasi-permanent lines of partition. Far from contemplating an eventual withdrawal of Soviet power from these advance outposts, Stalinist thinking was dominated by the idea of employing them--especially East Germany and North Korea--as wedges for the incorporation of the remaining parts of the partitioned countries in its power system. As the initial moves in this pattern of Soviet expansion worked themselves out, the inevitable signs of Western hostile reaction (Churchill's Fulton speech, for example) were seized upon in Moscow as evidence that the Western attitude toward Russia had been hostile from the very beginning, and Soviet propaganda unleashed its campaign of vitriolic recrimination against the Western powers which in so many ways set the tone of the postwar period. Hostility and tension mounted in the pattern of a vicious circle mentioned above.

During the critical years of 1946 and 1947 there appears to have taken place in the Kremlin a momentous re-assessment of the entire international situation in the light of postwar developments. Reflecting on the westward advance of Soviet power into the heart of Europe, the temporary disappearance of Germany and Japan from the ranks of the powers, the instability of the postwar governments in continental Western Europe, the unforeseen seriousness of the economic disorganization of the European economy as a result of the war and of the detachment of East European resources from it, the widespread ferment and unrest in Asia leading to the disintegration of European colonial empires and the weakening, in particular, of the British position in world affairs, the Stalinist leadership reached the conclusion that the time for a decision in the long-range Russian bid for a global preponderance of power was already at hand, contrary to the previous assumption that it would come at some indefinite point in the future. The fact that such a re-assessment did occur was most clearly demonstrated by the theoretical attack launched in May, 1947 against the dean of Kremlin economists, Eugene Varga, who had predicted, on the basis of an unusually empirical-minded investigation carried out during and immediately after the war, that the capitalist system contained the prerequisites for at least a decade of "relative stabilization" after the second world war. Varga's rather complacent picture of the slow steady march of a socialist economic revolution which would in due time prevail throughout most of the world was thrust aside, and in its place appeared the Stalinist apocalyptic vision of a life-and-death struggle between two opposing world camps centered respectively in Soviet Russia and the United States of America. The capitalist camp--gravely weakened by the war, shot through with domestic strife in every individual coun-

try, beset by insoluble economic problems and wallowing in inter-capitalist contradictions--was objectively incapable of pulling itself together and bringing about a new period of "relative capitalist stabilization" comparable to that achieved in the nineteen twenties after the first World War. As a result of the second World War the scales of world power had come into even balance and now they were tipping in favour of the Soviet bloc. This appraisal called for a maximum effort to weight the scales decisively in the direction they were tipping. It dictated a policy not of conservative restraint in foreign affairs combined with consolidation of positions already won, but of bringing relentless aggressive pressure to bear upon the international environment in order to effect a further and radical improvement of the Soviet position at the expense of the rival camp. The main lines of this new Stalinist appraisal were visible in Khda-nov's address at the founding meeting of the Cominform in September, 1947 and in Molotov's anniversary speech of November 6, 1947, which closed with the resounding cry: "We live in an age when all roads lead to communism!"

Out of this re-assessment of the international position emerged a whole series of offensive moves in Soviet foreign policy which were aimed either at enlarging the sphere of Soviet control or harassing Russia's opponents. This inaugurated a second and increasingly bitter period of the basic conflict, which lasted from 1947 until Stalin's death in March, 1953. During the early part of this new period the principal focus of Soviet pressure lay in Europe. Outstanding among its manifestations were the civil war in Greece, the creation of the Cominform, the desperate drive to block the success of the European recovery program, the seizure of Czechoslovakia

and the whole sequence of Soviet policy moves in Germany culminating in the blockade of Berlin. In the face of ever stiffening Western resistance, as shown in the Atlantic pact, rearmament, the airlift and the new stability which the American aid programs helped to create in Greece, Turkey and Western Europe--a resistance which was powerfully abetted by Tito's revolt against Stalinist methods of controlling the Soviet satellites--the European phase of the Soviet offensive finally slowed down to a virtual halt. There was, however, no corresponding diminution of the impulse behind it. Meanwhile, the Communist victory in China offered a convenient opportunity to shift the main focus of expansionist pressure into East Asia, where the situation in many lands favoured the use of the war by proxy as the principal method of Soviet expansion. The Asian phase of the grand offensive came to a bloody but inconclusive climax in the Soviet war by proxy in Korea.

Stalinism's supreme effort undertaken from 1947 onward to prevent a new "relative capitalist stabilization" and decisively alter the world balance of power by all means short of a general war was a failure at virtually every key point with the notable exception of China, where the Communist success was a triumph for Russia but hardly a direct product of Russian policy. The effort did, however, generate an enormous amount of international tension and set in motion certain processes which adversely affected the Soviet position. These were the endeavors of countries outside the orbit of Soviet control but inside the far larger orbit of Soviet ambition and animosity to set their affairs to order, strengthen themselves and band together in defensive coalitions like the Atlantic and Balkan pacts

and schemes for economic integration like the European coal-steel community. This meant that even in the absence of a general war the different basic elements of the Stalinist strategy had come into mutual conflict. More specifically, the ruthless pursuit of the strategies of harassment and expansion had finally goaded the free world into a posture of unity and strength which made it much less vulnerable than previously to the strategy of division. Nevertheless, so long as Stalin lived no disposition was manifested in Moscow to acknowledge this fact or to revise Soviet policies in the light of it. On the contrary, Stalin maintained stubbornly in ~~the~~ Economic Problems of Socialism in the U.S.S.R. that the contradictions between the leading capitalist states not only continued to exist but were "in practice" even more potent than the contradictions between the two world camps. What were the implications of this remarkable statement? In the present writer's view, Stalin was covertly arguing here against anonymous Soviet advocates of a policy of greater restraint which would allow international tension to subside and might induce the free world to abandon its dangerous new unity. He was saying in effect that this unity was merely superficial and could not long withstand the divisive tendencies inherent in the capitalist system--the unvoiced inference being that it was unnecessary to relieve the pressure and reduce the tension in order to disunite Russia's adversaries. Stalin was thus blinking the fact that different elements of the Stalinist strategy had come into mutual conflict and was insisting that the Soviet government should persevere in the policies which it had been following since 1947. Although this interpretation is speculative, there is a certain amount of indirect evidence to support it, particularly in the Soviet ideological

writings of the period immediately following the nineteenth Party Congress.* Stalin's aggressive "shock-brigade" speech at the closing session of the nineteenth Congress gave no inkling, certainly, of an intention to decrease world tension, nor did the whole series of post-Congress events in Moscow, including the preparation for a new purge trial based on the trumped up "doctors' plot." Although the Soviet government embarked upon no spectacular new act of expansion during this period, neither was there any easing of pressure or release of international tension until after Stalin died. It is particularly noteworthy in this connection that the third anniversary of the signing of the Sino-Soviet treaty of alliance was marked by the publication in Pravda of an article by Mao Tse-tung in which he promised that the war in Korea would be waged on for years if necessary until the winning of "complete victory."**

The death of Stalin came at a time of crisis of the postwar Stalinist foreign policy. The actions taken from 1947 on had failed to achieve a radical alteration of the world balance of power in favour of the Soviet bloc but did, on the other hand, produce a situation in which further efforts to realize this bold design were fraught with great danger to the continued maintenance of formal peace between the Soviet Union and the Western coalition. There were indications that the crisis was apparent to some more realistic minds in Moscow and that they had advocated--without success--the idea of calling at least a temporary halt to the march of Soviet expansion so as to allow the war danger to subside and encourage the Western

* See particularly the article by D. Chesnokov in Kommunist, 1953, No. 2, on Stalin's speech at the nineteenth Congress.

** Pravda, Feb. 14, 1953. See also the leading article in the issue for that date, in which Mao's statement is quoted.
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coalition to drift apart. Some of the foreign policy moves taken in Moscow since March of 1953 lend themselves to interpretation on the hypothesis that this "realistic" assessment prevailed among the new rulers of Russia once Stalin was out of the way. The reversal of Stalinist policy in Korea implicit in the speedy conclusion of an armistice on UN terms after Stalin died would fit in with such an interpretation, as would a number of other steps taken to reduce tension. On this hypothesis, the present period would constitute a lull in the basic conflict, a respite allowed by the new Soviet leadership while it concentrates upon internal affairs and upon the consolidation of international positions already won. Whatever its duration, it would represent no more than a change of tactics, leaving the long-range goal of Soviet foreign policy unchanged and the strategies for its achievement unimpaired.

While there is no firm evidence to support a more hopeful interpretation of Russian foreign policy after Stalin, the possibility that time will bring a deeper change, a change not merely of pace but of direction, should not be dogmatically ruled out. The analysis presented here suggests that the driving forces behind the basic conflict between Soviet Russia and the Western democracies have been subjective in origin. Stalinism's postwar offensive against the free world was not simply an effort to promote the national or imperial interests of Russia as a great power, although elements of national self-interest were prominent in it. Nor, on the other hand, was it a messianic quest to actualize an ideological image of the world, although ideological constructions have undoubtedly played a part in the determination and especially in the formulation of Soviet policy. It represents, in a deeper sense, the translation into

foreign policy of the animosities, ambitions and obsessions characteristic of a neurotic personality. This focuses attention upon the personalities of the men in power in Russia both before and after Stalin's death, and enhances the potential importance of shifts in the locus of power within the Soviet hierarchy. It seems highly probable that Stalin, who wielded autocratic power in Russia for upwards of two decades, furnished the principal inspiration for the neurotic phenomenon which we have called the Stalinist mentality, although the materials upon which he built were provided by history. The mentality can survive the man and live on in the policies of his successors, whose habits of political thought, after all, were formed and molded very largely under Stalin's personal influence. Nevertheless, the passing of Stalin may have opened up possibilities which did not exist while he lived for a change in the mind of Stalinism.

Such a change would mean in essence that the judgments, deliberations and actions of the men in power in Russia would no longer be dominated by a pathological psychology. The evolution away from this psychology would be manifested, firstly, in a drastic decline of the intense and pervasive hostility which appears to be the deepest mark of the spirit of Stalinism; secondly, in a fundamental relaxation of the aggressive pressure against the international environment which stems as a strategic necessity from this hostility; and thirdly, in a loosening of the compulsive rigidity of Stalinist thinking and behavior, which ultimately derives from the same source. The relaxation of aggressive pressure would not then be a mere tactical manoeuvre. It would signify the abandonment of the conviction

that the only way to come to terms with the international environment is to secure control over it, the abandonment, in other words, of the drive to dominate the world. The basic conflict which the drive for world domination has generated would consequently tend to subside. Such an evolution would not be marked by any dramatic ~~act~~ of ideological heresy, although the resultant loosening of Stalinist rigidity would very probably lead to changes in the ideological sphere as well as in others (as the example of post-Stalinist Yugoslavia shows). Nor would it produce any sudden desire on the part of the Soviet leadership to withdraw from foreign affairs into a position of national isolation. On the contrary, the concept of Russia's interests as a great power with manifold positions to defend and claims to assert in foreign affairs would come to the fore for the first time as the driving force behind Soviet foreign policy. In view of the present geographical spread of Russian power and influence, this means that very many thorny issues would remain to be resolved. However, with the subsiding of the underlying basic conflict which has imparted to all these issues a profoundly malignant character, they would no longer be impervious to the devices of reason and the resources of diplomacy.